

**Minutes of the Workforce Diversity Committee Meeting
May 31-June 1, 2000
Mississippi State, MS**

May 31, 8:30 a.m.

Dr. Jenkins opened the meeting welcoming everyone to the Mississippi State location and describing the research conducted at the location. ARS has been at this location since 1961.

Dr. King mentioned the ARS EEO Compliance Review of the Mid South Area and how important this Committee's input will be to the outcome of the Committee's review.

Baton Rouge, LA - Dr. Villa reported information since joining the Committee (August 1999). There has only been two vacancy announcements - 2 hires - both white males.

He also reported that special observances at location have been enhanced which was not done in the past. Web addresses are given out to employees to advise of web sites. Dr. King reiterated to Dr. Villa that he is the person at the location to spearhead diversification. This is a small location with only 26 permanent employees.

It was also discussed that to interest people in agricultural related sciences, we need to start out early--elementary/high school--and not wait until the college level.

Oxford, MS □ Dr. Steve Duke reported for the Oxford location. RL serves on advisory Committees at Alcorn State University, Mississippi Valley State University, and Alabama A&M University.

Lectures are given to schools by scientists at the National Sedimentation Laboratory. Both units participated in the Take Your Daughter to Work Day. Listening sessions were participated in by both Units. A number of female temporary/full time technicians have been hired.

No SCEP appointments at the Natural Products Chemistry Lab. Students trained at the student/graduate student level. The curriculum needed at the NSL is not available at nearby universities. This is why it is not feasible to use the SCEP for SY positions at the National Sedimentation Laboratory.

Dr. King stated that a SCEP appointment may not be feasible for all positions, but there are positions available where a SCEP appointment should and can be used. As part of our assignment, we are required to diversify the ARS workforce at all grade levels. He stated that opportunities are there and available.

Stoneville, MS - Rita Keeling reported that Location is hot and heavy hiring summer employees. Location participated in Job Shadow Day--students from nearby schools spent the day with scientists in the laboratory.

Catfish Genetics leads the Stoneville location with students enrolled in the SCEP program.

Poplarville, MS - Dr. Barbara J. Smith reported that the unit has a total of 19 employees including 5 research scientists. New hires within the past year include one SY (white male), three biological aids (1 African American female, 1 Hispanic female, and 1 White male), and an Asian female student. The Unit is currently recruiting for two SY positions and a secretary/office automation position. Three of the Unit's research scientists are collaborating with 1890 Universities by submitting Capacity Building Grants-3 grants are with Florida A&M; one with Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA; and two with Alcorn State University. One of the Unit's scientist received funding for a Summer Apprentice. A White female was hired for this position. The Unit also sponsored a Diabetic Information Workshop which was attended by employees at the location. The Unit is cooperating with a horticulture class at a local community college to landscape the grounds of the Poplarville Middle School. The Unit has also hosted tours by various

school groups from elementary to community college and university classes as well as homemaker groups.

Dr. King stressed that she (Dr. Smith) has to be a champion for diversity at the Poplarville location and keep the office informed. Advise the office of any difficulties. The focus of the Unit is changing from small fruits to vegetable and ornamental plants. Location lacks diversity.

Mississippi State, MS - Gay McCain: The location participated in school days on the farm. Employees participated/attended the Stoneville Black History Program. 3rd grade science and engineering lab. Western Kentucky State University. Large Internet/homepage. Rita Keeling will be the contact regarding committee being on the internet. David reported that there are approximately 30 million Hispanics in the U.S. today (about 11%) and is the fastest growing ethnic group. By the year 2005, Hispanics will surpass non-Hispanic African Americans as nation's second largest ethnic group, behind non-Hispanic whites. America is becoming more Hispanic. Need more assertive employment strategies if ARS is to look like America.

Maureen Wright - Attended the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Conference held at the Hyatt Regency, Lexington, KY, March 30-April 1, 2000. Kentucky State/University of Kentucky hosted this year's event. All platinum and gold sponsors were USDA. ARS was gold level sponsor. Less attended but the quality of students did not fall. Next meeting is scheduled to be held March 30-April 1, 2001, in Washington, DC, and hosted by Purdue University and the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign. President-Elect of MANRRS is Jane Ford-Wilson, USDA Liaison at Alabama A&M University.

Dr. Jordan wanted to know if ARS/New Orleans/Baton Rouge could host this annual meeting. Dr. Wright will check out the possibility. It was asked what role ARS is really playing in the conference. We need to be more aggressive in getting on the program.

J. McAlpine and M. Wright will follow-up with Jane Ford-Wilson regarding ARS' participation/involvement in the MANRRS Program beyond just setting up a booth.

Mississippi Alliance for Minority Participation (MAMP), Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation (LAMP), 2 blacks working in Dr. Fouss' lab, Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR). Tony to be the contact person and will provide each state within the area the contact for each of the above various programs.

Minority Access to Research Careers (MARC) Program □ post docs can be hired through this program. Tony to find out more information and be the contact person.

Two videos were shown on Workforce/Cultural Diversity. A lengthy discussion regarding the films followed number of summer employees. 2 grad students from china, 2 grad students from India, 2 female SCEP appointments (1 asian).

Auburn, AL - Betty Shepherd: Location is rapidly growing-funding started at \$700,000; now at over \$2M. Hugo H. Rogers was selected as Research Leader of the Soil Dynamics Research Unit; Permanent hires: 2 SYs (1 White male and 1 Asian female); 2 technicians (1 white male and 1 Asian female); 1 Category 3 scientist (white male); 1 Hispanic female permanent part-time office automation assistant to be selected; 1 African-American male to become a SCEP appointment when he enters grad school at Auburn University; 3 lab aids (1 African American female, 1 African American male, and 1 White female) to be hired as Research Apprentices; 2 summer interns; 2 STEP appointments (1 White male and 1 African American female); one SCEP appointment (white female); one RSA (African-American male); 3 students (2 African American females and 1 African American male) are working through a Specific Cooperative Agreement with Tuskegee University. The location has also conducted several student tours with local elementary and high schools. The Location also participated in the Shadow Program. Materials were posted/distributed for days of special observance. The location plan to appoint employees to coordinate activities for special observance occasions.

New Orleans, LA - David Ambrogio: Hispanic Association of Colleges/Universities (HACU) Report □ MSA has participated in program for the last 5 years. Area has funded one candidate per year; this year the candidate will be located at Stoneville. Dr. Army obligated (\$8500) of Area funding (yearly) for one candidate. This amount covers student stipend, travel from home to work-site, insurance, housing, etc. Dr. Duke hired 2 NACU students with his own funds. Dr. King wanted to know if there was any chance we could hire any of the three under the SCEP program. **Area Hispanic Employment Program Committee** - The Committee worked on creating a Hispanic Recruitment Directory. Need to do more regarding hiring. The Committee distributed a copy of the Directory to all Research Leaders/Location Coordinators/Location Administrative Officers in the Mid South Area. The Committee plans to send copies of the directory Hispanic Servicing Institutions and to employers/universities and develop ways to track usage of directory/how being used. It was suggested to add the directory to the Area's website. Need to check and see if Diversity Committee is posted on the

Archie Tucker, AAO, discussed the EEO/Civil Rights Compliance Review. Advised all to encourage fellow colleagues and ARS friends in the MSA to complete the EEO employee survey honestly and provide any additional comments they may have. This survey will assist the management team to better service MSA employees as it relates to EEO/Civil Rights.

The EEO Compliance Review team will arrive in the Mid South Area on August 16, 2000, and will remain for approximately 3 weeks. The team will randomly choose employees at New Orleans, LA; Stoneville, MS; and Auburn, AL, for face-to-face interviews. The questions will be similar to the questions asked on the survey with some differences. The final report will be completed and provided to Dr. Horn on October 18, 2000. Copies will be forwarded to the Area Director and to the Chairpersons of the Workforce Diversity Committee (Ed King and Betty Shepherd).

Anthony Edmund - Area Diversification Report: Tony discussed and passed out the Affirmative Employment Program for Minorities and Women Annual Affirmative Employment Program Accomplishment Report. Figures were taken from data submitted by the Office of Civil Rights. Each member will update figures for their perspective location and mail the corrected copy to Pat Brown. The updated copy will be forwarded to Tony for updating/correcting for inclusion as an attachment to the Minutes.

Figures were taken from data submitted by the Office of Civil Rights. Tony will send this information out to all Committee members and they will make sure it is made available to the Labs/Units at their perspective locations.

Jose Villa - Charts distributed--Permanent MSA Employees and MSA Locations. Jose to run a report on females vs. males. Dr. Villa will enlist the help of Debbie Boykin, Area Statistician and generate several reports-age, employees, permanent employees, race, especially from 1995 to present.

Archie Tucker - EEO/Outreach Award Criteria-establish two awards: Supervisory/managerial award and support award. It was suggested that the Workforce Diversity Committee be nominated for this award.

Rita Keeling - Mid South Area Student Career Experience Program (SCEP). Make sure you get the best and brightest people for this program. Also make sure that they are science oriented. The school/university does not have to be a minority/1890.

Jimmy McAlpine - Youth Motivational Task Force YMTF: One of the missions of the Task force is to motivate Historically Black College students of all ethnic groups with specific emphasis toward African-American students to excel to the best of their abilities and encouraged to seek non-traditional careers. The Mid South Area (Stoneville, MS) has supported the YMTF at two 1890 Land Grant Institutions (Alabama A&M University and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff) since 1991 by providing leadership and financial support of the annual conference. ARS, for the last 3 years, has sponsored a full-page advertisement in the YMTF Souvenir booklet.

FIRST STEP Program - Dr. King

Ended: 4:45 p.m.

Conference call with Korona Prince at 8:30 a.m.

Beltsville area first one hour to one hour forty-five minutes, center director for entrance - interview area/associate director 2-hour. Management team. Employees should expect about an hour. Employees will be chosen randomly via computer. No leave used by employees. If travel needed, gov used and employee will be reimbursed. Not asking for volunteers. Number of people called and wanted to be interviewed but employees are chosen randomly. Surveys should be mailed back to HQ and employees should not put their names/address on envelope. Committee members are encouraged to advise employees at their location.

August 16, beginning review and will last 3 weeks.

September 1, exit conference

October 18, Committee will receive a copy of the report and a copy will be posted on the internet.

Questions similar to survey, but hopefully employee will elaborate a little more.

Do you know who your Area Civil Rights Manager is and how to get in touch with him/her.

Every 5 years there will be a review. This is the first time ARS has had a full review. There will be probably someone to spot check one of the Universities. 1890 schools and HACUs will be followed up with.

Mediation Handbook - will send several copies to send to committee members.

Sexual harassment charges goes to the civil rights staff. Will be putting something out regarding the different

tony edmund is scheduled to go washington, dc, directed reassignment.

The call ended at 8:55 a.m.

Cooperating with AL A&M for several years. But more recently we have been involved in setting up SCEP appointments with them. We will review some of the areas of work we have with AL A&M.

Dean Jim Shuford - 1862/1890 Land grant universities. The difference (the oldest 1890 university is in Mississippi-Alcorn University). 5500 students - 1200 graduate students. Food science bachelor, masters, and phd.; 400 students in agriculture; 55 faculty slots in the college of agriculture. Alabama A&M its the only university that offers a phd in ag related sciences.

Dr. Govind Sharma, Department of Plant and Soil Science, AL A&M University.

Jenkins, Saha, Sistani

Both Capacity building grants have been funded. Conservation tillage at the soil dynamics lab - Dr. reeves. Drs. Did hardee/doug streett - bt protein in soil dr. duke - b collaboration in precision agriculture dr. carlos alonso -watershed analysis - possible collaboration/capacity building grant. We are looking at about six (6) specific cooperative agreements.

Allen Cohen - food technology. The team will be visiting New Orleans in September to further look at the center and to see exactly what area of research they will be conducting.

Dr. Knipling's lecture is memorialized in the series of lectures that have been established.

Dr. McArthur Floyd - to develop mutually beneficial partnership.

Plan of work - Two items: 1) agri-forestry; 2) natural resource management. Would like to see MOU developed; hopefully by the end of the year. Would like to see co-location of ARS scientists and facilities on campus.

Would like to publicly thank Dr. Army who supports this effort. Drs. Saha and Sistani. Dr. Horn/Knipling have talked regarding the vision/partnership.

Dr. King stated we were very impressed with the AL A&M University.
The meeting ended at 10:00 a.m.